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Facing Fear Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Identify Your Fear

2 · Is Your Fear Hurting You?

3 · Understand Your Fear

4 · Identify Negative Thoughts

5 · Mindfulness Exercise

6 · Challenge Negative Thoughts

7 · Use Positive Affirmations

8 · Past Challenges & Empowerment Reflection

9 · Relaxation Techniques

10 · Fear Avoidance & Safety Behaviors

11 · Exposure Hierarchy

12 · Imaginative Exposure

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How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

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Identify Your Fear

1. Write down specific situations or circumstances that cause you anxiety or fear. The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ Fear of public speaking
- ☐ Fear of uncertainty or the unknown
- ☐ Fear of rejection
- ☐ Fear of change
- ☐ Fear of intimacy
- ☐ Fear of being judged
- ☐ Fear of loneliness
- ☐ Fear of confrontation
- ☐ Fear of failure
- ☐ Fear of success
- ☐ Fear of commitment
- ☐ Fear of being vulnerable
- ☐ Fear of making mistakes
- ☐ Fear of abandonment
- ☐ Fear of aging
- ☐ Fear of missing out (FOMO)

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Write down your top 3 fear and rate their intensity (1 the lowest – 10 the highest). This helps you identify and prioritize which fears to address first.

Your Fear: _____

Intensity

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Your Fear: _____

Intensity

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Your Fear: _____

Intensity

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Is Your Fear Hurting You?

How does this fear affect your daily life? Consider your physical symptoms, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Following are some common effects of fear. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

Physical Symptoms:

- ☐ Increased heart rate
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Trembling or shaking
- ☐ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ☐ Dizziness or lightheadedness
- ☐ Nausea or stomach discomfort
- ☐ Muscle tension or tightness
- ☐ Restlessness or fidgeting
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Emotional Symptoms:

- ☐ Intense feelings of anxiety or unease
- ☐ Overwhelming sense of dread or impending doom
- ☐ Irritability or frustration
- ☐ Feeling on edge or constantly alert
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed or out of control
- ☐ Mood swings or irritability

- ☐ Panic attacks (sudden bouts of intense fear accompanied by physical symptoms)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Cognitive Symptoms:

- ☐ Excessive worrying or preoccupation with potential dangers or negative outcomes
- ☐ Negative self-talk
- ☐ Racing thoughts or difficulty stopping repetitive thoughts
- ☐ Catastrophic thinking (assuming the worst possible scenario)
- ☐ Trouble making decisions or feeling indecisive
- ☐ Difficulty in problem-solving or finding solutions
- ☐ Poor memory or forgetfulness
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Behavioral Symptoms:

- ☐ Avoidance of situations or places that trigger fear
- ☐ Social withdrawal or isolation
- ☐ Procrastination or avoidance of responsibilities due to fear
- ☐ Difficulty initiating or completing tasks
- ☐ Rituals or compulsive behaviors performed to alleviate anxiety
- ☐ Restlessness or pacing
- ☐ Difficulty sleeping or experiencing insomnia
- ☐ Changes in appetite (loss of appetite or increased food consumption)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Understand Your Fear

1. What is your fear? Describe it in detail.

2. How long have you been experiencing this fear? Has it intensified or remained stable over time?

3. Are there any specific triggers or situations that worsen your fear? If so, describe them.

4. How does this fear hold you back from pursuing your goals, dreams, or opportunities?

5. How does this fear make you feel about yourself?

8. Have you made any efforts to confront or overcome this fear? If yes, what were the results? If no, why not?

10. What are your goals in relation to overcoming this fear? How would you like to see your life improve as a result?

Identify Negative Thoughts

1. Identify any negative thoughts or beliefs that seem to be connect to your fear. Following are some examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ Something terrible is going to happen.
- ☐ I'm not capable of handling challenging situations.
- ☐ I'll never be safe in this world.
- ☐ Fear is always a sign that something bad is about to happen.
- ☐ If I let my guard down, something bad will happen.
- ☐ The world is a dangerous and unsafe place.
- ☐ All my fears will come true.
- ☐ It's better to expect the worst to avoid disappointment.
- ☐ Fear is an uncontrollable force that will consume me.
- ☐ I'm not strong enough to confront my fears.
- ☐ Avoiding my fears is the only way to stay safe.
- ☐ If I take risks, I'll inevitably end up hurt or disappointed.
- ☐ I'm the only one experiencing this level of fear.
- ☐ I'm unable to cope with uncertainty and unpredictability.
- ☐ If I face my fears, I'll only make them stronger.
- ☐ It's too late for me to overcome this fear.
- ☐ I'll embarrass myself if I try to confront this fear.
- ☐ I'm not capable of managing the consequences of facing my fear.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Mindfulness Exercise

Identifying negative thoughts can be challenging, as they often occur automatically and unconsciously. This is where mindfulness can play a valuable role. Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment with an attitude of curiosity and non-judgment.

Mindfulness also cultivates a non-judgmental attitude, meaning you can observe negative thoughts without labeling them as good or bad. Instead, you can acknowledge them simply as passing mental events.

Instructions

1. Find a quiet and comfortable space where you won't be disturbed. Sit in a relaxed posture, with your back straight and your feet on the floor.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to settle into the present moment.
3. Shift your attention to your body sensations. Notice the physical sensations of sitting, the contact with the chair or cushion, and the feeling of your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
4. Bring your awareness to your thoughts. Allow them to arise without judgment or attachment. Notice any negative thoughts or worries that come up related to fear.
5. As you observe these negative thoughts, try to label them as best as you can. For example, you might recognize thoughts like "I'm not capable enough" or "Something bad will happen."

6. Once you've labeled the thought, take a step back and observe it without getting caught up in its content. Recognize that it is just a passing thought and not an absolute truth.
7. Now, bring your attention back to your breath. Focus on the sensation of breathing in and breathing out. Allow your breath to anchor you in the present moment.
8. Whenever you notice your mind wandering back to negative thoughts, gently let go and bring your attention back to your breath.
9. Continue this practice for a few minutes, gradually extending the duration as you feel more comfortable.

Challenge Negative Thoughts

1. Identify Negative Thoughts:

Write down negative thoughts you want to challenge:

2. Reality Check:

Question the evidence supporting your fear. Ask yourself:

Thought: _____

- What evidence do I have that this fear will come true?

- Are there any alternative explanations or possibilities?

- Have I faced similar situations in the past and handled them successfully?

3. Analyze the Consequences:

- Identify the worst-case scenario that you fear.

Ask yourself:

- How likely is this outcome to happen?

- Can I handle or cope with these consequences if they occur? How?

- What would I say to a friend who has a similar thought? Would I see it differently?

Use Positive Affirmations

Create positive affirmations that counteract the negative thoughts. Focus on affirmations that instill confidence, resilience, and a sense of empowerment. The following are some examples to inspire you:

- ☐ I am capable of handling any challenges that come my way.
- ☐ Fear is just a feeling, and I can choose to rise above it.
- ☐ I release all fears and embrace the power within me.
- ☐ I deserve to live a life free from fear and full of joy.
- ☐ I trust in my ability to navigate through difficult situations.
- ☐ I have overcome fear before, and I can do it again.
- ☐ Fear is an opportunity for growth and self-discovery.
- ☐ I have everything I need within me to overcome any fear that arises.
- ☐ I release all doubts and insecurities and embrace my true power.
- ☐ I am open to new experiences and opportunities, even if they make me feel afraid.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Past Challenges & Empowerment Reflection

This exercise will help you identify your strengths and remind you of the resilience you possess. So, whenever you feel fearful or challenged, you can refer to this worksheet to empower yourself:

1. List down significant challenges or fears you have overcome in the past.

Example: overcoming my anxiety about a job interview

2. For each challenge or fear, write down the actions you took to overcome it.

Example: To overcome my anxiety about a job interview, I prepared well in advance and rehearsed possible questions with a friend.

3. How did you feel when you overcame these challenges or fears? What did you learn from the experience?

Example: I felt relieved and grateful for the support of my friends. I learned that having a support system and thorough preparation can help reduce anxiety.

4. Are there any similarities between your past challenges/fears and your current one?

Example: I realized that all the experience involved some level of fear, but with time, effort, and dedication, I was able to overcome them.

5. How can you apply what you learned from your past experiences to overcome your current fear?

Example: I can apply what I learned to my current fear by approaching it with consistency, preparation, and a positive mindset. I can also seek support from my loved ones to overcome my fear.

Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation techniques, when practiced daily, can help you relax and train your mind and body to respond calmly to stressful situations.

Deep breathing exercises:

1. Sit or lie down in a quiet, comfortable place.
2. Close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose, hold it for a few seconds.
3. Slowly exhale through your mouth.
4. Repeat the process, but this time, as you inhale, visualize yourself breathing in calmness and peace, and as you exhale, visualize yourself releasing your fears and worries.

Progressive muscle relaxation:

1. Sit or lie down in a quiet, comfortable place.
2. Starting with your toes, tense the muscles for 10 seconds, then release them and relax for 20 seconds.
3. Move up to your feet, calves, thighs, buttocks, stomach, chest, arms, shoulders, neck, and finally your face. Tense each set of muscles for 10 seconds, then release them and relax for 20 seconds.
4. As you relax each muscle group, visualize the tension melting away, and feel a sense of deep relaxation.

Visualization:

1. Close your eyes and visualize a peaceful place such as a beach or a forest.
2. Imagine yourself being there and feeling the warmth of the sun, the cool breeze blowing on your face, or the soft grass beneath your feet.
3. Use all of your senses to make the visualization as real as possible.
4. Spend a few minutes in this peaceful place, and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

Grounding exercise:

1. Sit comfortably in a chair or on the floor.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax.
3. Now, focus on your senses. Notice five things you can see around you. Take a moment to observe their shape, color, and texture.
4. Next, notice four things you can physically feel. It could be the texture of your clothes, the sensation of your feet on the ground, or the temperature of the air.
5. Pay attention to three things you can hear. It could be the sound of traffic, birds chirping, or even the sound of your own breath.
6. Take note of two things you can smell. It could be the scent of flowers, food, or anything else nearby.
7. Finally, focus on one thing you can taste. You can take a sip of a drink or simply pay attention to the lingering taste in your mouth.

Fear Avoidance & Safety Behaviors

Identify behaviors that you engage in to avoid confronting your fears. These avoidance behaviors can actually reinforce your fears over time, so it's important to become aware of them.

Safety behaviors are actions or strategies that individuals engage in to manage or alleviate anxiety, fear, or distress (e.g., Constantly seeking reassurance, using distractions like music, carrying specific items that serve as a source of comfort, etc.)

Example:

- Avoiding social gatherings or parties because of fear of judgment or embarrassment.*
- Avoiding eye contact or looking down when feeling anxious in social situations.*

Fear: _____

Avoidance and safety behavior:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Exposure Hierarchy

Create a hierarchy of situations or events related to your fears that you can gradually expose yourself to.

1. Name your fear:

Write down the specific fear or phobia you want to work on.

2. Break it down:

Divide your fear into smaller, manageable steps or situations related to your fear. Start with the least anxiety-provoking situation and gradually progress towards more challenging ones.

For example, if you have a fear of dogs, the steps might look like this:

- a) Look at pictures of dogs.*
- b) Watch videos of dogs from a distance.*
- c) Observe a dog from a safe distance.*
- d) Approach a friendly, leashed dog with its owner.*
- e) Touch or pet a calm and familiar dog.*
- f) Spend time playing with a dog you feel comfortable with.*

Imaginative Exposure

Imaginative exposure can help you confront your fear using visualization techniques. During imaginative exposure, individuals are guided through mentally creating scenarios that provoke their fear or anxiety. By repeatedly exposing themselves to these imagined situations, individuals can gradually reduce their fear response and develop coping strategies.

1. Identify your fear:

Clearly state and describe the fear you want to address.

Example: Fear of public speaking

2. Create a safe and relaxing environment:

Find a quiet and comfortable space where you can practice visualization without distractions. Close your eyes, take deep breaths, and imagine a peaceful setting that makes you feel at ease.

Example: Imagine sitting on a serene beach, feeling the warmth of the sun and hearing the soothing sound of waves.

My peaceful setting: _____

3. Gradual exposure:

Using your exposure Hierarchy, start with an imagined scenario that triggers mild anxiety but is still manageable for you. As you gain confidence, gradually progress to more challenging situations in your mind.

Example:

- a) Imagine standing in front of a small group of close friends and delivering a short speech.*
- b) Visualize speaking in front of a larger audience, such as a classroom or a gathering at work.*
- c) Picture yourself giving a presentation to a larger crowd, such as at a conference or event.*
- d) Envision speaking to a massive audience, such as on a stage or in a packed auditorium.*

4. Engage your senses:

Make your visualizations vivid by incorporating details that engage all your senses. Pay attention to what you see, hear, feel, taste, and smell in each scenario.

Example:

- a) Notice the faces of your friends, the room's lighting, and the supportive atmosphere.*
- b) Hear the sounds of applause and friendly encouragement from the audience.*
- c) Feel the adrenaline rush and your feet planted firmly on the stage.*
- d) Taste the satisfaction of successfully delivering your speech and receiving positive feedback.*

What I could sense: _____

5. Practice relaxation techniques:

Throughout each visualization, focus on maintaining a relaxed state. Use deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or any other relaxation exercises that work well for you.

6. Repeat and refine:

Regularly practice these imaginative exposures, gradually increasing the difficulty level as you become more comfortable. Remember to be patient with yourself and celebrate even small achievements along the way.

Gradual Exposure

Using your Exposure Hierarchy, start with the first scenario on your hierarchy and practice it until your fear level decreases by at least two points on the 0-10 scale. Gradually work your way up your hierarchy as you become more comfortable with each situation.

For each situation:

- Plan a specific time to engage in the exposure.
- Use relaxation techniques, if necessary, to manage anxiety.
- Stay in the situation long enough for your anxiety to decrease naturally.
- Repeat the exposure until your fear level reduces to a manageable level.

1. Situation/Scenario:

2. Level of fear (0-10):

- Before Exposure: _____
- During Exposure: _____
- After Exposure: _____

3. Duration of exposure (in minutes): _____

4. Description of the exposure session, including thoughts:

5. Coping Strategies Used:

Situation/Scenario	Level of fear before/during/after (0-10)	Duration of exposure	Experience of exposure (thoughts, feelings, etc.)	Coping Strategies Used
e.g., Giving a presentation in a small group setting	- Before: 8 - During: 6 - After: 4	10 minutes	- Before: I felt extremely anxious and worried about stumbling over my words and forgetting what I wanted to say. - During: My anxiety decreased slightly. I focused on my prepared content and tried to maintain steady eye contact with the audience. - After: I felt a sense of relief and accomplishment.	I practiced deep breathing before and during the presentation to help calm my nerves and reduce anxiety.

Situation/Scenario	Level of fear before/during/ after (0-10)	Duration of exposure	Experience of exposure (thoughts, feelings, etc.)	Coping Strategies Used

Take Small Risks

Taking risk can expand your comfort zone and help you build confidence in facing your fears.

1. Identify an area in your life where you feel stuck or in a comfort zone:

Example: Socializing

2. List three small actions you can take to step out of your comfort zone in this area:

Example:

- Action 1: *Strike up a conversation with a stranger at a coffee shop.*

- Action 2: *Attend a meetup group with people who share a common interest.*

- Action 3: *Join a social activity group at work.*

- Action 1: _____

- Action 2: _____

- Action 3: _____

3. Start with the easiest action on your list and describe how you will take action:

Example: Action 1: I'll choose a coffee shop that's not too busy, and I'll try to find someone who looks approachable. I'll start with a simple greeting and ask them a few open-ended questions to get to know them better.

4. Consider any potential obstacles or challenges that may arise, and come up with strategies to address them:

Example: feeling nervous or anxious about starting a conversation with a stranger. To address this, I'll focus on my breathing and remind myself that I'm simply trying to connect with another person.

5. Set a specific timeframe for completing each action on your list:

Example: within the next two weeks

6. After completing each action, reflect on your experience:

- How did it make you feel?

Example: a bit nervous at first, but once I started the conversation, I felt more relaxed and connected with the other person.

- Did you learn anything new about yourself?

Example: that I'm capable of starting conversations with strangers, and that it can lead to interesting connections and conversations.

- What positive outcomes came from stepping out of your comfort zone?

Example: I felt proud of myself. It also opened up an opportunity to meet someone new and learn more about them.

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: ·Facing Fear· is not a standalone DSM-5-TR diagnosis · non-diagnostic or contextual/quasi-diagnostic construct
- ICD-11 CDDR: No dedicated ICD-11 CDDR mental-disorder code under this title · non-diagnostic or contextual construct
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- A symptom checklist or self-rating cannot establish diagnosis. Any diagnostic discussion must address clinically significant distress/impairment, required course or duration where applicable, developmental and cultural context, substance/medication and medical causes, comorbidity, exclusions, and reasonable differentials without reproducing copyrighted criteria.

Document-specific corrections

- Describe Facing Fear as a contextual, functional, occupational, umbrella, or proposed construct-not a confirmed diagnosis-unless a separately recognized disorder is assessed.
- Where Facing Fear discusses symptoms, add the missing diagnostic frame: clinically meaningful distress/impairment, relevant course or duration, exclusions, developmental and cultural context, substance/medication or medical causes, and plausible differentials.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Revise exposure content on pages [1, 3, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28] to require consent, an objectively safe graded hierarchy, condition-specific response guidance, progress review, and stop/reassessment criteria; never equate flooding with effective exposure.
- Clinically review medical or treatment statements on pages [7]; remove prescriptive medication advice, clarify coordination with licensed medical care, and update contraindications or urgent warning signs for the specific topic.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- For Facing Fear, exposure must be voluntary, graded, condition-specific, and conducted only in objectively safe and lawful situations. Do not prescribe flooding; screen medical limitations, trauma cues, dissociation, intoxication, and whether avoidance reflects real danger rather than phobic fear.
- Exposure work should be formulation-driven, collaborative, graded, and designed to reduce avoidance and unhelpful safety behavior-not delivered as forced flooding. Screen medical and trauma-related explanations when relevant.

Crisis and current resources

- For Facing Fear, use: ·If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services.· Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

2026 Clinical Alignment

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Authoritative references

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